

# **Communities call for all spheres of Government to consider their daily life struggles amid the Affordable Housing Indaba with the private sector**

We are a collective of people from across the City of Cape Town who have occupied land or buildings as a result of the state's failure to provide dignified affordable housing to residents. As individuals we made the decision to occupy because we urgently needed shelter and access to urban land close to work opportunities, social amenities, healthcare and more. We are not criminals; we are families who need homes. The need for affordable housing has been even more urgent since Covid-19 and we refuse to be treated as criminals rather than collaborators in the response to this crisis.

We are here today because we all have issues with the City of Cape Town's provision of affordable housing and feel the effects of spatial apartheid. While our communities are affected in different ways, we stand together in solidarity today to demand dignified housing solutions for all, against the race and class divisions created in the city.

We agree that public land should be released for affordable housing, especially in well-located areas. We welcome the purpose of today's Affordable Housing Indaba: the launch of the City of Cape Town's Land Release Programme for More Affordable Housing. This is something we have been calling for. Our lives in the occupations are evidence of how urgent the affordable housing need is.

However, our communities were not invited to join this Indaba. The Mayor made no effort to reach our representatives and failed to respond when they reached out to him. Again, we are on the outside, trying to have our voices heard. As the people urgently in need of affordable housing, we are deeply concerned about:

- The privatisation of public land in a way that does not benefit the people who most need access to land and housing,
- The exclusion of poor and working-class people from 1) this Affordable Housing Indaba 2) the City's provision of housing and housing policies generally,
- Where, when, how much, what type and how affordable the 'affordable housing' coming out of the City's Land Release Programme will be.

## **We demand:**

### **1. Nothing about us without us!**

People must be central in formulating housing solutions for themselves. The state and all private actors must work with communities on dignified housing solutions rather than brutalising our people with any type of Law Enforcement or Private Security.

### **2. Mayor, Premier and National Minister for Human Settlements engage us today!**

Executive Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis, Premier Alan Winde and National Minister for Human Settlements Mmamoloko Kubayi must come outside to engage the community members present today about our concerns OR let all community representatives into the Indaba to participate in the discussions.

**3. Visit our Communities!**

Executive Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis, Premier Alan Winde and National Minister for Human Settlements Mmamoloko Kubayi must commit today to timeframes for visiting all communities present during the month of April for meaningful engagement about their ideas and community-specific needs. The communities present are willing to assist the Mayor to convene such meetings.

**4. Scrap unjust By-laws!**

The Unlawful Occupation By-law & the Streets, Public places and Noise Nuisances By-law must be scrapped immediately because they criminalise poor people for choices made in the absence of affordable housing.

**5. Provide essential services!**

The relevant government departments of all spheres must urgently provide an implementation plan including timeframes and who will be responsible for the provision of accessible and safe essential services of water, electricity and ablution facilities to all communities living in informal settlements and inner-city occupations within this year.

**6. Public land for the most truly affordable housing!**

The City's Departments of Human Settlements, Spatial Planning and Environment and Economic Growth and Investment must create a mechanism to secure the maximum and most affordable housing on public land when it is released to the private sector. Affordability must be determined in terms of the actual incomes of Capetonians.

**7. Recognise all occupations!**

All spheres of government must administratively recognise and work with occupations in finding solutions that work for the people living there. Starting with releasing occupied land and buildings to the communities occupying. The City must lease land and buildings directly to the poor where they occupy, in the same way you lease to golf courses.

**8. Consult with people!**

The City needs to review public participation processes and principles around land and housing issues to involve affected communities and not only developers and those who stand to profit.

**9. Truly affordable housing now!**

Affordable housing built on the land that is released must be truly affordable in relation to what people actually earn.

The challenges of land occupation will only increase if you don't meet our demands and work with us collaboratively, rather than criminalising us.

**On behalf of the following communities:**

Covid-19, Island, Wetlands, Delft, Backstage, Philippi, Kraaifontein, New Rest, Sibanye, Nqentsu, Makhaza Phakathi, Sanitaza, eButsheni, Vukiland, Azania, BM Section, RR, Siyakhana, Noxolo Xawuka, eThembeni, Ntuthu from Khayelitsha and Reclaim the City from Woodstock and Sea Point.

**Dignified affordable housing for all!**

**Spatial justice now!**

## **Contacts**

### **Luthando Mcuntula**

Covid eMfuleni Informal Settlements

068 230 6036

### **Nikelwa Maqula**

Backstage Community

076 108 7968

### **Myolise Magibisela**

Ithemba's people Movement

063 918 5476

### **Bevil Lucas**

Reclaim the City

083 718 1577

### **Luyanda Mtamzeli**

Ndifuna Ukwazi

078 788 3251